

ENGLISH LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF AGEING (ELSA)

The ELSA is a new data resource on health, economic position and quality of life for older people. The survey will cover the broad set of topics relevant to a full understanding of the ageing process, these include: health, disability, healthy life expectancy, the relationship between economic position and health, the determinants of economic position in older age, the timing and circumstances of retirement and post-retirement labour market activity and the nature of social networks, support and participation.

Listing of study variables & measurement of variables

Demographic:

- Household demographics
- Individual demographics

Health:

- Self-reported general health
- Longstanding illness and limiting longstanding illness
- Eyesight including cataract surgery and glaucoma
- Hearing
- Diagnosed conditions
- Hypertension
- CHD
- Diabetes
- Stroke
- Chronic lung diseases
- Asthma
- Arthritis and Osteoporosis
- Cancer
- Parkinson's disease
- Mental Illness
- Dementia
- Falls, fractures and joint replacements
- Pain
- Dizziness
- Chest pain (Rose Angina Questionnaire)
- MRC respiratory questionnaire
- Intermittent claudication
- Disability and functioning including avoidance, ADLs and IADLs, attributions for limitations and receipt of formal and informal care.
- Mobility aids
- Incontinence of urine
- Smoking
- Alcohol consumption
- Physical activity
- Proxy cognitive assessment
- Direct measurements
- Walking speed test

Social Participation:

- Caring, who and hours
- Leisure occupation
- Civic participation (voting, membership of political parties, reading a newspaper)
- Organization membership
- Difficulties with access to key facilities (e.g. dentist, post office, etc.)
- GHQ12
- Social capital
- Access to public transport

Work, Pension and Income:

- Current economic activity and job status/occupational coding
- Last/Usual pay after deductions for NI/Tax/Pension
- Amount of share of profit/loss for self-employed
- Person scheme membership and details
- Pension contributions and additional contributions (AVCs)
- Summary pension scheme details
- Expected size of lump sum/ pension on retirement
- Current pension value accumulated in the fund (DC pensions only).
- Consent to contact employer to find out pension scheme rules
- Sources and adequacy of information on pensions
- Contributions to pension schemes other than current scheme
- Duration in scheme, nature of retained rights and expected pension
- Age of retirement and reason for retirement
- Coverage and contributions to medical insurance
- Income and assets

Housing:

- Current tenure
- Housing type and quality
- House value
- Mortgage liabilities

Cognitive Function:

- Meta-memory
- Orientation in time
- Prospective memory
- Word list learning
- Verbal fluency
- Visual search
- Basic arithmetic ability

Psychosocial Factors:

- Control and demands in life in general
- Short CES-D depression scale
- Perceived start of old age/end of middle age

Expectations:

- Chances of living to age X and above
- Chances of continuing to work full-time after a certain age.
- Chances of continuing to work part-time after a certain age.
- Chances of health limiting the ability to work before reaching 65
- Chances of working for pay at some time in the future (this goes to people that are not working at present)
- Chances of moving to a nursing home in the next 5 years
- Chances of not having enough income to meet needs after stopping work
- Chances of not having enough income to meet needs at some point in the future
- Chances of receiving any inheritance during the next 10 years
- Chances of receiving an inheritance of £10,000 during the next 10 years
- Chances of leaving an inheritance of £50,000 or more
- Chances of leaving any inheritance
- Chances of leaving an inheritance of £150,000 or more
- Chances of house value increasing/decreasing by 5% over the next year
- Financial planning periods
- Job risks

Self-Completion Questionnaire:

- CASP-19 Quality of Life (control, autonomy, self-realization and pleasure)
- Control and demands in life in general
- Social status ladder
- Social support from spouse, children, other family and friends (covering frequency of contacts, quality of relationships and level of support)

The English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA)

A new data resource on health, economic position and quality of life for older people

1) Short Summary

Investigating the relationships between health, economic position and social participation as people age is one of the most important research questions currently facing the policy community in Britain. More needs to be known about individual experiences, as people plan for, move into and progress beyond retirement, particularly as this process itself is becoming increasingly diverse within the population. Equally important, however, is the fact that the population as a whole is ageing and life expectancies are increasing. Addressing the policy issues that arise when providing support (whether medical, social or economic) for such a changing population is important and timely. Also important is understanding how far this increasing life expectancy is associated with good health, adequate economic resources and, ultimately, a good quality of life. The factors that may determine this good quality of life need to be identified.

There are currently no data in the UK that cover and connect the full range of topics necessary to understand the economic, social, psychological and health elements of the ageing process. The English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) is designed to fill this gap. The aim of ELSA is to explore the unfolding relationships between health and functioning, social networks and economic position. It is in effect a study of people's quality of life as they age beyond 50 and of the factors associated with it.

The survey will cover the broad set of topics relevant to a full understanding of the ageing process. These include:

- Health, disability, healthy life expectancy ;
- The relationship between economic position and health;
- The determinants of economic position in older age;
- The timing and circumstances of retirement and post-retirement labour market activity;
- Social participation and support;
- Household and family structure and the transfer of resources.

The ELSA survey sample is being drawn from respondents to the Health Survey for England (HSE) – a study conducted jointly by the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, UCL, and the National Centre for Social Research, on behalf of the Department of Health. Around 12,000 respondents from three separate years of that survey (1998, 1999 and 2001) are being recruited to provide a representative sample of the English population aged 50 or over. Later, the HSE may again be drawn upon to boost particular sub-populations of interest, or to recruit younger people into the ELSA sample as it ages.

The major advantage of the HSE sampling source is that baseline data on respondents' health (details of morbidity, lifestyle, diets and blood samples) have already been collected. The health data is being supplemented by the collection of detailed baseline economic data in the first wave of ELSA. All rounds of ELSA will track changes in health, economic position and social participation. Following each round of data collection a report containing key analyses will be published, together with a commentary. The data will be made publicly available.

ELSA timetable

Wave 0	Initial HSE fieldwork and biomedical tests; already collected
Wave 1	ELSA fieldwork, face to face interview: 2002
Wave 2	ELSA fieldwork, face to face interview and nurse visit: 2004

The topics to be covered at the wave 1 contact with ELSA respondents are:

- General Health;
- Diagnosed disease;
- Physical functioning;
- Psychological health;
- Cognitive functioning;
- Health behaviours (smoking and alcohol consumption);
- Current employment;
- Income
- Current pensions;
- Pension history;
- Wealth;
- Consumption;
- Social participation and support.

The research budget required to fund the first five-year cycle of ELSA has been provided by the US National Institute on Aging and the UK Government. (Department of Health, Department of Work and Pensions, Office for National Statistics, Department for Transport Local Government and the Regions, Department for Education and Skills, Department of Culture, Media and Sport and HM Treasury).

The principal investigator for ELSA is Professor Sir Michael Marmot, Head of the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, UCL, and Director of the International Centre for Health and Society, UCL. The scientific team includes researchers from: **UCL, Institute for Fiscal Studies, National Centre for Social Research, Cambridge University, University of Nottingham and University of Oxford.**

2) Status of the Project

The project is funded from August 2000 to August 2005. The first wave was completed in October 2003, and the second wave is currently in progress and will be completed at the end of the project.

3) Study Website

www.ifs.org.uk/elsa

4) Suggested Keywords

Ageing, Longitudinal, Health, Social, Socioeconomic, Surveys, Gerontology, Epidemiology, Public Health,

5) Contact Us

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Country:	United Kingdom
Sample Size:	12,000
Age Group:	50 Plus
Gender:	Both
# Cohorts:	
Total Waves:	Currently funded for two, but the study is ongoing in principle
Physiological Measures	Yes
Functional Health	Yes
Lifestyle: Physical Activity	Yes
Lifestyle: Nutrition	No
Lifestyle: Other	Alcohol/Exercise/Smoking
Minorities	Yes
Psychological Measures	Yes
Cognitive Abilities	Yes
Social and Demographic Measures	Yes
Health Services Utilization	Not in wave1 but quality of care in wave2